

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-07 EA-09 FRB-01 INR-07 NEA-10 NSAE-00 USIA-15

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4691

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USDEL MTN GENEVA

UNCLAS LONDON 13018

PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR UK

SUBJECT: UK MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE REVIEWS WORST HIT  
DROUGHT AREAS

BEGIN SUMMARY: UK MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE PEART HAS  
THIS WEEK BEEN VISITING THE WORST STRICKEN DROUGHT AREAS  
IN THE UK AND MEETING WITH NFU CHIEFS WHO HAVE BEEN  
URGING UPON HIM VARIOUS MEASURES THEY FEEL NECESSARY FOR  
ALLEVIATING WORST PROBLEMS. MEANWHILE, THE PRIME MINI-  
STER HAS SET UP A CABINET COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHAT  
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EMERGENCY ACTION COULD COUNTER DROUGHT EFFECTS.

COMMITTEE WILL INCLUDE PEART AND WILL HOLD FIRST MEETING  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 24. END SUMMARY.

1. ON AUGUST 16 AND 17 UK MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE MADE  
FLYING VISITS TO WORST HIT DROUGHT AREAS INCLUDING EAST  
ANGLIA, WEST MIDLANDS, BRISTOL AREA, SOMERSET, DORSET  
AND DEVON. PEART SAW AT FIRST HAND EFFECTS ON GROWING,  
OR RATHER NOT GROWING, POTATO, SUGAR BEET AND FODDER  
CROPS AND VERY THIN, PARCHED VEGETABLES. IN WEST  
COUNTRY, FARMERS IMPRESSED UPON HIM SCORCHED CONDITION  
OF PASTURES AND DEARTH OF HAY AND SILAGE.

2. IN DEVON, LOCAL NFU CHIEFS URGED A MINIMUM 10 PER-  
CENT GREEN POUND DEVALUATION WHICH UNION SAID WILL  
PROVIDE AN EXTRA 4 PENCE PER GALLON ON MILK AND HIGHER  
RETURNS ON CATTLE AND PIGS. BACK IN LONDON, PEART THEN  
CONSULTED WITH RICHARD BUTLER, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE  
NFU BUT MINISTRY HAS MADE NO STATEMENT ABOUT ANY MEASURES  
AND MINISTER WILL NOT BE COMMITTED TO ANY TIMETABLE OF  
ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS. TOPICS DISCUSSED ACCORDING TO  
BUTLER INCLUDED GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY FOR TRANSPORT OF  
FODDER TO SHORT AREAS, ASSISTANCE IN RE-SEEDING PASTURES,  
AVERAGING OF TAXATION TO ALLOW FOR GOOD AND BAD YEARS,  
AS WELL AS THE GREEN POUND QUESTION.

3. MEANWHILE, A NEW MINISTRY SURVEY OF FODDER SITUATION  
SAYS "CAREFUL RATIONING OF AVAILABLE HAY AND SILAGE  
WILL BE ESSENTIAL FROM NOW ON." PROSPECTS FOR POTATOES  
FURTHERMORE WERE ESPECIALLY BAD NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF LACK  
OF GROWTH AND BULKING BUT ALSO WIDESPREAD DISEASE AND  
PERSISTENT SECOND GROWTH. IN LIVESTOCK SECTOR, MINISTRY  
SAYS MILK YIELDS ARE FALLING AND CATTLE AND SHEEP ARE  
GAINING WEIGHT ONLY SLIGHTLY BUT MAINTAINS THAT ACTUAL  
WATER SHORTAGES FOR IRRIGATION AND LIVESTOCK HAVE NOT  
YET BECOME TOO SEVERE.

4. MEANWHILE, A LABOUR MP HAS WARNED THE MINISTER NOT  
TO TAKE TOO MUCH NOTICE OF FARMERS' PLEAS AND COMPLAINTS  
SAYING THAT THEY ARE NO MORE THAN AN EXCUSE TO RAISE FOOD  
PRICES. MINISTER IN ANY CASE WILL BE OBLIGED TO TREAD  
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VERY WARILY IF AID FOR FARMERS IS LIKELY TO RAISE FOOD  
PRICES AND JEOPARDISE ANTI-INFLATION POLICY.

5. LONG TERM FORECAST FOR PERIOD TO SEPTEMBER 15 IS FOR  
STILL MORE WARM, DRY WEATHER. REPORTS OF LARGE SCALE  
CONSUMER STOCKING UP WITH FROZEN VEGETABLES HAVE LED  
THE MINISTRY TO APPEAL FOR MODERATION. FROZEN FOOD  
PROCESSORS SAY ALREADY, HOWEVER, THEY MAY HAVE TO RELY

ON EXPENSIVE IMPORTED SUPPLIES TO MAKE UP DEFICIT IN UK  
CROPS OF VEGETABLES FOR FREEZING.

ARMSTRONG

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## Message Attributes

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